mermet lake

CONSERVATION AREA

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Illinois Department of Conservation

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THE AREA

Mermet Lake Conservation Area is an old cypress swamp which has been made into a waterfowl refuge. Primarily the area was developed for duck hunting but several thousand geese also frequent the area each winter and a limited number are harvested during the annual waterfowl season.

The original acreage acquired in 1949, in Massac County, one-half mile southwest of Mermet on U.S. 45, has been increased to 2,577 acres, of which 452 are permanent water.

NATURAL FEATURES

One of the first major developments at Mermet was the construction of a system of levees, creating a lake in 1962. The lake serves as a reservoir and a supply of water to temporarily flood 2 walk-in duck hunting areas and a permanent blind duck hunting area. The water in the lake is dropped from 3 to 4 feet each fall to accommodate the duck hunters. In the Spring, the lake level is restored to normal by a series of wells and pumps. Several thousand cypress trees have been planted recently along the lake shoreline and throughout the area in an effort to maintain the natural aesthetic appearance of a cypress-tupelo swamp.

Approximately 225 acres of millet and grain sorghum are planted annually in open area fields in the blind area. The food attracts waterfowl to the area and greatly enhances waterfowl hunting success. Hunting hours on the area close at noon. This enables waterfowl undisturbed use of available food on the area in the afternoons.

A good population of deer, squirrel and furbearing forest game exists in the timbered part of the area. No special management program for these species is in effect. The rare purple gallinule has also been sighted nesting on this area.

FACILITIES

Picnicking: A few picnic tables with camp stoves are available in a small area at the refuge. Pit toilets are on the grounds. There is no drinking water, no refreshment stand, and no camping at the area.

Fishing: About 5 miles of shoreline can be used for fishing for crappie, bluegill, largemouth bass, sunfish, channel catfish, bullhead and carp.

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Boating: The 452-acre lake, with a maximum depth of 12 feet, is a major attraction at the refuge. Private boats use the 2 launching ramps and 10 hp motors are allowed.

Hunting: Check with the District Wildlife Manager or the refuge manager for hunting dates. Only waterfowl hunting is permitted and a check station is in operation during the season. There are two flooded pin oak management units for walk-in hunting and one open water area in which blinds are awarded on a two year basis with a drawing held every other year.

Please: This area is for all to enjoy so help keep it clean. Put all litter in the nearest available trash container. No flowers, plants, shrubs or trees may be removed or damaged. If you need help or have a question, contact the site manager.

MERMET SWAMP NATURE PRESERVE

At the southwest corner of Mermet Lake Conservation Area, 43 acres have been set aside for non-game, rare and endangered species. An old growth forest of pin oak, sweet gum and swamp white oak occurs at the west end of the preserve. A second growth community of bald cypress, swamp cottonwood and pumpkin ash occurs in the swamp. Red Oak, white oak and tulip poplar predominate on the uplands. Red iris, arrow arum and American snowbell bush are some of the unusual plants present. No access or trails have been developed. Contact the refuge manager at Mermet Conservation Area before entering.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION . . .

Admittance will not be granted groups of 25 or more persons to any state park or conservation area unless permission from the park ranger has been secured to use the facilities. It is also required that groups of minors have adequate supervision and that at least one responsible adult accompany each group not exceeding 15 minors. All pets must be on a leash.

Numerous state parks and memorials are within easy access of every part of the state. Lodges, cabins and dining rooms are important features of Illinois Beach, Starved Rock, Pere Marquette, White Pines Forest and Giant City. Reservations for lodging should be made with lodge managers.

All state parks are open the year round. When weather conditions necessitate the closing of park roads during freezing and thawing periods, access to park facilities is by foot only.

For more details about this site, contact the District Wildlife Manager, Union Co. Refuge, R.R. #2, Jonesboro, 62952, phone 618/833-5175 or Refuge Manager, R.R. #1, Belknap, 62908, Phone 618/524-5577. For information on other sites, write the Department of Conservation, Information/Education Division, State Office Building, Springfield, 62706.

PARK MAPS

Waterfowl Hunting Blind Area
Flooded during Duck Season

Tucker Ditch

Boat Launch
& Parking Area

Levee Road

Reservoir

No.1 Walk-In Duck Hunting Area
Flooded during Duck Season

Picnic Area

Boat Launch
& Parking

East Side Road

Office

Manager's
Res

No. 2 Walk-In Duck Hunting Area
(Flooded during Duck Season)

Entrance

Nature Preserve

To Metropolis

Highway 45

Vienna

Area Entrance